



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

COMMUNICATOR

Effectively & Efficiently Delivering Essential Services

FALL ❄️ WINTER 2016



Fall Flooding Impacts Blue Earth County

Areas of Blue Earth County were impacted by the severe rain events that occurred in late September and caused significant flooding. County residents with damaged property due to the recent heavy rainfalls, especially in St. Clair and the eastern portion of Blue Earth County are encouraged to complete a preliminary report of damages. The large amounts of rainfall may have resulted in damage to property including flooded basements throughout communities and rural areas of the County. To learn more and to complete the brief online damaged property form visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov/damagedproperty. Pictured above: An aerial image of St. Clair, Minnesota during the September flooding provided by the City of St. Clair.

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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Blue Earth County Communicator is published biannually to increase public awareness and involvement in county government.



For more information about the publication, or to submit questions and/or comments, contact:

Communications Office
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. 5th St., Mankato, MN 56001

Phone 304-4491 – Fax 304-4344
info@blueearthcountymn.gov



**Award-Winning
Publication**

by the National
Association of County
Information Officers

MCLAUGHLIN JOINS BLUE EARTH COUNTY AS VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER



WHAT'S NEW

Michael McLaughlin joined Blue Earth County in August as its new Veterans Service Officer, replacing long-time officer Gary Evenson. McLaughlin will oversee the County's Veterans Department that helps administer Federal benefits, provides transportation to the VA Hospital and helps connect veterans with programs and services.



"I'm excited for the opportunity to join Blue Earth County and to further my passion for helping Veterans and their families within this role," stated Michael McLaughlin, Blue Earth County Veterans Services Officer. "I look forward to serving Blue Earth County Veterans and continuing efforts in bringing forward issues facing area Veterans."

McLaughlin was recently appointed to the Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee (VRHAC).

Watch for a New Look and Features on the Blue Earth County Website



The Blue Earth County website will receive an updated look and enhanced functionality as part of a website refresh project that is expected to be live in November. The refresh is part of a planned upgrade with the County's website provider to offer new design elements and features. A complete redesign of the site was last completed in 2012. One main site enhancement that will be included in the 2016 refresh is mobile optimization which will allow content to be viewed easier on smart phones, tablets and various mobile devices.

Stay tuned for more information and be sure to view the new site features at:

www.blueearthcountymn.gov

Stay Engaged with Blue Earth County on Social Media!



Like us on Facebook and learn about news, job postings and more!



Follow all the Blue Earth County happenings on Twitter.



View board meetings and more on YouTube!



Adult Criminal Complaint Search Feature on the Blue Earth County Website

The Office of Blue Earth County Attorney has an online tool that allows the public to search for adult criminal complaints directly from the Blue Earth County website. The Adult Criminal Complaint Search contains information concerning adult criminal cases filed by the Office of Blue Earth County Attorney in Blue Earth County District Court. The system offers convenient access to adult criminal complaint information by visiting:

www.blueearthcountymn.gov/criminalcomplaints.

Adult criminal complaints filed on or after October 1, 2015, are available in the database. Previous complaints are available by visiting the Court Administration office in person at the Blue Earth County Justice Center, 401 Carver Road, Mankato.

For more information please contact the Office of Blue Earth County Attorney at 304-4600, or attorney@blueearthcountymn.gov.

Local PCs for People Program Showcased at National ConnectALL Summit

A program first established in Blue Earth County, known as PCs for People, was recently showcased at a ConnectALL Summit on Digital Inclusion held in Washington, D.C. at the White House to discuss best practices and ideas on how to modernize internet connectivity legislation for low income users across the nation.

Andrew Elofson, Supportive Housing Social Worker for Blue Earth County and founder of PCs for People and Casey Sorenson, Executive Director for PCs for People were invited to speak at the summit to help share solutions that are working in Blue Earth County and the Twin Cities along with other locations as part of PCs for People mission to help connect low income individuals and families to technology. Elofson and Sorenson also had the opportunity to represent PCs for People in discussions surrounding the implementation of new provisions to Federal legislation that expands telephone connectivity funding (known as the FCC Lifeline Program) to broadband services.

The ConnectALL Summit brought together a number of leaders and groups to raise awareness regarding digital inclusion and to help map out strategies for reaching the goal of connecting 20 million more

Andrew Elofson,
Supportive Housing
Social Worker for
Blue Earth County and
founder of PCs for People
and Casey Sorenson,
Executive Director for
PCs for People



Americans to broadband by 2020. Additionally, innovative approaches to tackling the key barriers to broadband adoption, affordable services, low-cost devices, digital literacy and new resources available to communities to help close the digital divide were all part of the agenda. To learn more about the ConnectALL initiative visit; www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office and search the "Connect All Initiative".

Since the PCs for People Program started in 1998 with its first donation of a computer from Blue Earth County to a low-income teenage boy who had a talent for technology, approximately 50,000 computers have been distributed to those in need along with internet connectivity being provided to 15,000 people across 45 states. Today, PCs for People's mission continues with providing used computers and technology devices in addition to support services and affordable hot spot technology for low-income individuals and families.

Learn more at pcsforpeople.org.

VOTE 2016

Your vote is your voice—get registered, get informed, go vote!

PRIMARY ELECTION

Tuesday, August 9

VOTE ABSENTEE

Vote by mail or in person September 23 through November 7.

REGISTER TO VOTE

Register in advance by October 18 to save time on Election Day.

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 8

SEE YOUR SAMPLE BALLOT

To see the candidates and questions that will be on your ballot, go to mnvotes.org.

VOTING LOCATIONS AND HOURS

To find out where you vote, visit mnvotes.org. Most polling places are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

WHAT TO BRING ON ELECTION DAY

If you are registered to vote at your current address, you do not need to bring identification. If you need to register or to update your registration, you will need to show proof of residence before you vote. To learn more, visit mnvotes.org or call 1-877-600-VOTE.

VOTE EARLY WITH AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

You can vote early at your local elections office beginning Friday, September 23. You can also apply to have an absentee ballot sent to you in the mail. More information and ballots may be requested online at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/absenteevoting or www.mnvotes.org by clicking on “Other Ways to Vote.”

Absentee ballot voters may also visit the Blue Earth County Elections Office in the lower level of the Blue Earth County Government Center, located at 410 S. 5th Street, Mankato. Hours for absentee ballot voting are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Minnesota State law allows any eligible voter to cast an absentee ballot. Voters no longer need an “excuse” to be allowed to vote absentee. Military and overseas voters may also visit www.mnvotes.org to learn about how they may be eligible to vote. ■

Hours for absentee ballot voting are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. The Blue Earth County Election Office will also be open on Saturday, November 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and until 5 p.m. Monday, November 7.

WHO CAN VOTE?

To vote in Minnesota, you must be a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old on Election Day, and a resident of Minnesota for at least 20 days. If you had a felony conviction, you can vote after you finish all parts of your sentence, including any probation, parole, or other conditions such as restitution. You can vote while under guardianship, unless a judge has revoked your right to vote.

REGISTER TO VOTE

You must be registered to vote at your current address. To register or to update your registration, go to mnvotes.org. You can also register at your polling place on Election Day. You must show proof of your name and current address. For more details, visit mnvotes.org or call 1-877-600-VOTE.

For more information about elections, please visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov/elections or call 304-4341.

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, December 13 at 6 p.m.

Property owners should watch the mail in late November for their annual Truth-in-Taxation Notices. Notices inform of upcoming public meetings to discuss proposed property taxes and budgets for 2017 taxes. Blue Earth County’s meeting will be held at **6 p.m. on Tuesday, December 13** at the Historic Courthouse at 204 South 5th Street in Mankato. Meetings for other taxing authorities will be listed on the notice.



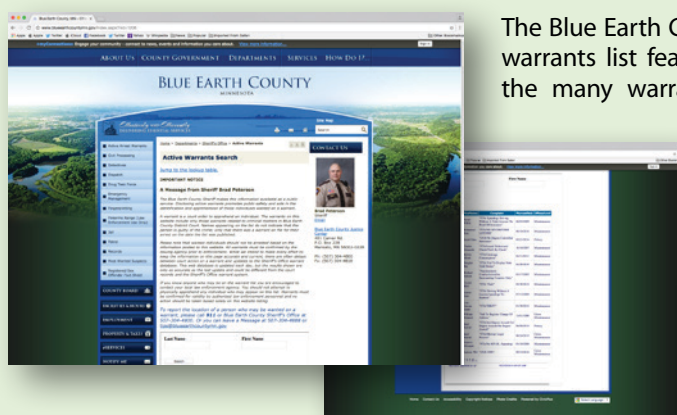
For more information please contact Blue Earth County Administration at 304-4284.

Bottle-shaped Recycling Bins Available for Purchase



A long-time program that was established in 2008 and provided bottle-shaped recycling bins at area gas stations in addition to recycling jobs for adults with disabilities has been discontinued due in part to lower commodity prices. The bins were pulled from convenience stores recently when the organization that had been emptying them discontinued offering the service. Businesses, organizations and individuals now have the opportunity to purchase bottle-shaped recycling bins as a way to boost recycling efforts throughout our area. The bins are available from the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM) in any quantity. Bins with a new bottle wrap are priced at \$75 and those with a used bottle wrap at \$55 each and can be ordered by calling (651)-641-4589 or sending an e-mail to ram@recycleminnesota.org. “It’s unfortunate that the original program had to end, but we are hoping that area convenience stores consider continuing this service to patrons by purchasing their own bins and that additional businesses, organizations and other groups take advantage of this opportunity to promote and provide recycling for their patrons and employees,” stated Jean Lundquist, Recycling Education Coordinator for Blue Earth County. “Every bin purchase helps make a difference and allows for recycling to be an easy choice.” To learn more about the Message in a Bottle Program, visit www.recycleminnesota.org.

Sheriff’s Office Implements New Online Active Warrant List



The Blue Earth County Sheriff’s Office has added a new active warrants list feature to the County website to help manage the many warrants throughout Blue Earth County at any given time. The new searchable online tool allows the public an opportunity to utilize a searchable list that is updated daily. Anyone with information on the whereabouts of someone on the warrant list is asked to either call 911 or 304-4864. To learn more visit the Active Warrants website page.

www.blueearthcountymn.gov



TAXPAYER SERVICES

DID YOU KNOW?



Agricultural Land Sales can be viewed by Township on the Blue Earth County Website

Please visit:
www.blueearthcountymn.gov/agsales

Records are available starting in October 2012 and are updated periodically.

For more information, contact the Taxpayer Services Department at 304-4251.



Certificate of Real Estate Value Do You Need to File?

Buyers of real property must file a Certificate of Real Estate Value in the county where the property is located if the sale price or other consideration is more than \$1,000.

If a Certificate of Real Estate Value is required, failure to file it will result in making a property ineligible for homestead.

eCRV is now the State of Minnesota's only CRV form. It allows submitters to complete the form electronically rather than completing it by hand.

The sales information provided on the Certificates of Real Estate Value is available for public searching on Blue Earth County's website and is also available for searching statewide.

For questions about the Certificate of Real Estate Value form, you may contact the Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services department at 304-4251. You may also visit the Minnesota Department of Revenue's Certificate of Real Estate website.

When Will a County Appraiser Visit Your Property?

Blue Earth County's Taxpayer Services Department has a County Assessor and seven full-time County Appraisers who are responsible for valuing and classifying (based on how a property is used) over 34,000 parcels. The office values the properties every year, and part of this process requires the appraisers to review properties throughout the County.

The County's appraisers update specific property characteristics through the review process for each property approximately once every five years. Minnesota state law requires this review. Reviews typically occur during the summer and fall of each year.

However, whenever new construction, alterations, or improvements occur or if a property is sold, it is reviewed. This means some properties are reviewed many years in a row, while others are only reviewed once every five years.

The appraiser starts by verifying the exterior measurements of the buildings. The appraiser also photographs the exterior of the property to use for future reference. Whenever possible, the appraiser attempts to view the interior of the property. It is necessary for the appraiser to view the interior of the property to document the amenities and determine the quality and condition of each property.

Characteristics of the property that the appraiser looks for include:

- Age of property
- Basement, finish
- Basement, foundation
- Basement, walk-out
- Condition of property
- Extra features (patios, porches, decks, etc.)
- Layout of property
- Number of baths
- Number of fireplaces
- Number of rooms
- Possible water problems
- Quality of interior finish



County appraisers always present photo identification proving they are a Blue Earth County employee and will never enter the interior of the property without permission.

Collecting this information is very important to the mass appraisal system used by Blue Earth County. Those details allow us to make the most accurate estimates of market value because our system allows us to make adjustments for differences in property characteristics. The review allows the appraiser to gather information on characteristics of the property that affect market value. Market value, along with how the property is used, are major components in determining how much tax individual properties pay.

For more information, or to visit with the County Appraiser assigned to your property, please visit the county website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov and search for "property appraisal." You can e-mail your appraiser and also review the information we have on your property. For more information, call the Taxpayer Services Department at 507-304-4251 Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ■

MAKE PLANS TO GET YOUR PASSPORT EARLY

Record passport demand is expected throughout the remainder of 2016, in 2017, and into 2018. Fall is the ideal time to obtain or renew passports before peak travel season gets underway. Applying during the off-peak months can help ensure passports are processed within routine service commitment of 6 weeks (expedited service at an additional fee is available) by the U.S. Department of State.

The Blue Earth County Passport Office is located within Taxpayer Services on first floor of the Historic Courthouse at 204 S. 5th Street in Mankato and accepts passport applications Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Applicants are encouraged to first visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov/passports to review instructions and get a head start on filling out necessary forms before arriving in person to complete the application process. Taxpayer Services provides passport photo services.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Ponderosa Recycling and Service Building: How does it work?

Last June, the new Recycling and Service building at the Ponderosa Landfill was put into service. The primary goal of this building is to provide safety and convenience to Landfill customers by collecting general public waste in the building, away from the large commercial trucks, which still go down to the landfill.

A GUIDE FOR USING THE FACILITY:

- **DRIVE ONTO THE SCALE** - Pull up to the speaker on your left near the end of the scale. The scale operator will ask you questions and give you instructions. When the light turns green, drive off the scale.
- **PROCEED TO BUILDING** - Unless you have a very large load, you will be directed into the building. Turn RIGHT when you get off the scale and follow the road.
- **WAIT YOUR TURN** - If the door is closed, please wait to enter the building, as other vehicles are ahead of you. If several vehicles are already in the building, please wait until it is safe to enter.
- **NO SMOKING IN THE BUILDING** - PLEASE DO NOT SMOKE in the building or in your car while you are in the building.
- **WASTE DROP-OFF AREAS** - An attendant is usually available to answer your questions and direct you to the proper unloading areas. Mattress drop-off is immediately to your left. Mattresses and other bulky furniture items are processed for recycling or resource recovery.



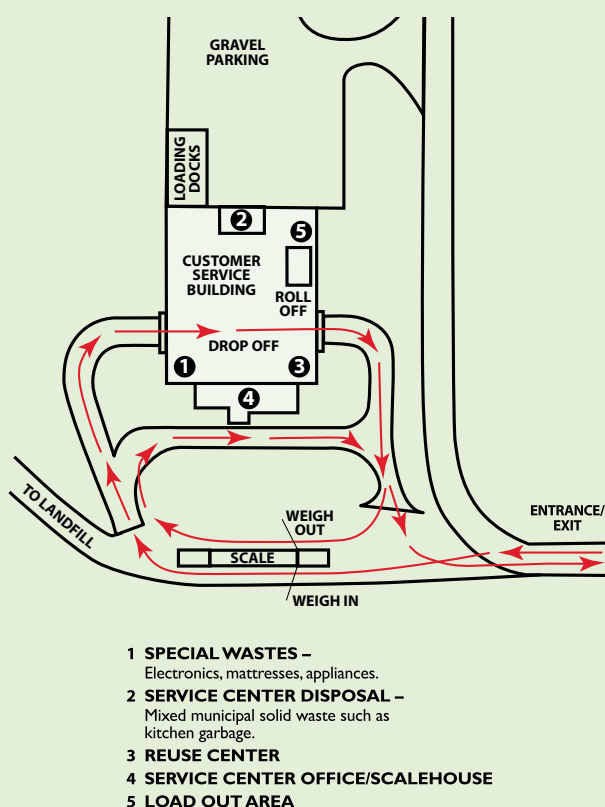
- **RE-USE AREA** - Certain items which still have some life left in them are pulled out and placed here. These items are free for the asking. If you see something here you like, ask the attendant to set it aside for you. You may claim it after you have gone back across the scale.
- **MIXED RECYCLING** - The container on the right is for recyclables, including: plastic, metal and glass food and beverage containers, as well as corrugated cardboard and recyclable paper.
- **GARBAGE** - On the far left is the garbage deposit area. Look for sign which says "Deposit waste here." Please deposit your waste as close to the wall as you can to keep the driving area clean. The Ponderosa accepts most household garbage, building debris, and other miscellaneous trash. The Ponderosa does NOT accept liquid waste, hazardous waste, or yard waste.
- **SCRAP METAL** - The last container on the right is for scrap metal. Anything primarily metal may be deposited here.
- **TIRES, APPLIANCES, ELECTRONICS** - These items are stored along the far wall to the left. Please check with the attendant before leaving items in this area.
- **EXIT THE BUILDING** - Exit the door on the east side of the building and turn right.
- **WEIGH OUT** - Drive around to the scale, and drive across it from the same direction you entered the first time. Wait for the green light, then exit to the right, drive up to the window and pay your bill.
- **CLAIM YOUR RE-USE ITEMS** - If you saw something in the Re-Use area you want, now is the time to pick it up.

Please do not bring hazardous wastes to the Ponderosa for disposal. Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) may be taken to the Blue Earth County HHW facility, free of charge for residential waste. Visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov to learn more about using the HHW facility. 📄



Blue Earth County Board members and Greater Mankato Growth Ambassadors at the facility's ribbon-cutting.

FACILITY MAP & TRAFFIC FLOW



WELL AND SEPTIC DISCLOSURE REQUIRED AT PROPERTY TRANSFER

Wells

Prior to signing an agreement to sell or transfer property, the seller must always disclose in writing to the buyer, the presence and status of all (in-use, not-in-use, or properly sealed) water wells located on the property. This well disclosure document is required by State Law to be submitted to the Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services Department at the time of recording. If wells are not properly disclosed, the buyer has up to six years to initiate civil action to recover costs (including attorney's fees) for properly sealing unused wells.



Septic Systems

The disclosure of any septic system on a property is a state law requirement per Minnesota Statute §115.55, subd. 6 and Blue Earth County Ordinance. The Blue Earth County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System Ordinance requires that at the point of property ownership transfer that either: A compliance inspection or current certificate of compliance be presented to the buyer, or A written agreement that the septic system will be replaced within 10 months of the transfer. A copy of the compliance inspection or written agreement to replace the non-compliant septic system must be submitted to Blue Earth County Environmental Services within 30 days of property transfer.

If you are selling or thinking about selling your property and have well or septic questions please call Blue Earth County Environmental Services at 304-4381.

To learn more about the Ponderosa Landfill visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov or contact the Waste & Recycling hotline at 304-4242.





Keep Blue Earth County Beautiful

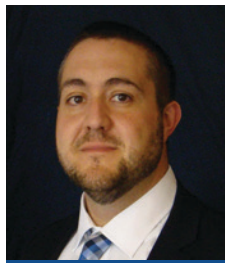
The Blue Earth County Adopt-A-Highway Program was established to improve the beauty of our highway roadsides with community help. Companies, clubs, families, or organizations have an opportunity to make a commitment to keeping Blue Earth County looking good by “adopting” segments of highway and pledging to keep them litter-free.

Blue Earth County provides signs at the end of the group segments to recognize the volunteer efforts. Segments are typically two miles in length and groups are asked to pick up litter three times a year.

For more information on how your group can sponsor a section of Blue Earth County highway, contact Blue Earth County Public Works at 304-4025.

New Public Works Director

Ryan Thilges, P.E. was selected as the Public Works Director/County Engineer for Blue Earth County in May 2016, replacing long-time Engineer Alan Forsberg. Thilges was promoted from his role as Assistant Public Works Director, which he served in since 2008. Throughout his time with Blue Earth County he has worked on many challenging projects and helped manage and preserve the County's highways, bridges, parks and infrastructure. He is a licensed Professional Civil Engineer with a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Minnesota State University, Mankato.



Ryan Thilges, P.E.

2016 Construction Updates

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS



County Road 1 from Highway 30 to Good Thunder

County Road 1 has been under the second phase of construction this summer as a staged two-year project to improve safety, replace deteriorated pavement and improve drainage. The existing bituminous pavement has been cold in place recycled and a new layer of pavement placed on top. The new road has a 10-ton pavement with wider shoulders to accommodate the farm to market traffic. Motorists will have a safe, modern road for decades to come. The \$2.5 million construction contract is being completed by Ulland Brothers, Inc. based in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

County Road 1 (Old Highway 66) from Good Thunder to County Road 9

Old Highway 66 from Good Thunder to Mankato is now County Road 1. Using State Turnback funds, the County is currently reconstructing the road to provide modern, safe access for the public, while respecting the roads historic, aesthetic and natural values. This phase includes full reconstruction of the road from Good Thunder to 1.5 miles north. The remaining 4.5 miles to County Road 9 will feature cold in-place recycled pavement with a new layer of pavement above, widened shoulders, new drainage pipes and culverts, and safer in-slopes.

Rapidan Dam

The Rapidan Dam is located south of Mankato on the Blue Earth River and is an Amburson Type Hollow Reinforced Concrete dam. The dam was constructed in 1910 and stands 87 feet tall and 475 feet long with a drainage area of 2,430 square miles. The Rapidan Dam can generate enough hydroelectric power for 2,000-3,000 houses at full capacity. Through the action by the County Board, County Staff, and area legislators, Blue



Earth County received a 2014 DNR Dam Safety Grant for \$2.4 million in order to enhance dam safety and stability. Following years of research, engineering analysis, and coordination between the County, Eagle Creek Renewable Energy (Rapidan Dam Operator), and the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee repairs were agreed to, designed, and prepared for construction.

The repairs include four major items:

1. Revising the pulley locations for the five steel tainter gates allowing for a higher volume of water to pass through to meet IDF flood flow rate requirements.
2. Removing the two east timber needle gates and filling the void with reinforced concrete in order to eliminate the concern for failure of the timber gates that could lead to erosion of the erodible sandstone bedrock below and adjacent to the dam.
3. Filling the four sluice gates (originally intended to remove sediment from upstream of the dam) with concrete in order to prevent piping under the dam and also enhancing stability.
4. Repair the joint where the two downstream energy dissipation concrete aprons meet as well as repairing two scour holes that have developed in the aprons.

Work on the dam will begin in mid to late October with completion in 2016. The remaining downstream repairs will be scheduled when river flows are low enough to provide for safe working conditions. Kraemer North America of Burnsville, Minnesota was awarded the \$1.2 million construction contract.



Bituminous Overlays

Bituminous pavements need maintenance to remain in a serviceable condition. Every 15 to 20 years a new layer of bituminous, called an overlay, needs to be placed. These overlays are costly, but along with crack sealing, seal coating and patching are essential to a long, economical pavement life. This summer Blue Earth County overlaid County Road 26 from County Road 86 to County Road 27, County Road 46 from County Road 13 to County Road 156, County Road 53 from County Road 53 to Pemberton, County Road 90 from MN 22 to MN 83 along with County Roads 146, 147, & 161. Ulland Brothers Inc. of Albert Lea and SMC of Mankato have the construction contracts that total \$2.5 million, which are being funded by a combination of County State Aid Highway and local Road and Bridge funds.

PLANNING PROJECTS UPDATE

County Road 12

County Road 12 on the east side of Mankato from the Mankato regional airport to Highway 83 has been an ongoing project for the last several years. The last stage of County Road 12 from County Road 17 (extension of Madison Avenue) to Highway 83 is designed and right of way is being acquired. The road is scheduled for construction in 2017 using a combination of Federal, Local Option Sales Tax, State and local funds. The project provides a needed north/south link in our regional transportation system, facilitates and encourages economic development and diverts traffic from the busy Highway 22 corridor. The roadway will be four lane from County Road 17 to Hoffman Road, then two lane to Highway 83 with roundabout intersections located at County Road 17, Hoffman Road and Highway 83, with a future roundabout at Bassett Drive. The new section of road will serve the newly opened Prairie Winds Junior High School and several planned developments. A trail will parallel the road.

County Road 1 (Old MN Highway 66) – County Road 9 to Mankato

The County is currently working on designing this segment of County Road 1 to provide modern, safe access for the public, while respecting the roads historic, aesthetic and natural values. The rugged topography, adjacent rivers, soft soils and active erosion sites from County Road 9 to Mankato provide a design challenge. In 2017 the County intends to complete design and acquire right of way for this segment. County Road 1 (Old MN Highway 66) will be available as a detour for MnDot's Highway 22 project during 2017. In 2018, the County is planning to begin construction on this segment. A public open house featuring preliminary design plans is set for Wednesday, November 2 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Blue Earth County Public Works located at 35 Map Drive in Mankato.

COUNTY ROAD 1 OPEN HOUSE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2
FROM 4 TO 6 P.M.
35 MAP DRIVE, MANKATO



Dodd Ford Bridge Dedication Ceremony

A bridge dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Historic County Road 147 Bridge, also known as the Dodd Ford Bridge, took place earlier this year. Amboy area residents, family members of Mr. Ford, officials and project partners came together to celebrate completion of the bridge, highlight project information and share stories about the unique structure. The 1901 bridge is listed on the National Registry of Historic places and is one of only two remaining examples of respected bridge builder, L.H. Johnson's work from that time period. As part of the unique bridge rehabilitation project, the historic value of the bridge truss was preserved while constructing new steel beams and a concrete deck that will carry full legal bridge loads for modern standards.

For more information about the project contact Blue Earth County Public Works at 304-4025.

PARK DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR GUARANTEED SAND AND GRAVEL SITE

Blue Earth County is in the process of purchasing the former Guaranteed Sand and Gravel property south of Mankato in cooperation with the city of Mankato who will own and maintain the Sanger Pit portion of the parcel. MN DNR grant funding, along with shared funding from both the city of Mankato and Blue Earth County made the purchase of the unique and scenic properties possible. The County plans to develop the Guaranteed Sand and Gravel portion into a rustic, low-maintenance park over the next few years and is seeking the public's input regarding features, future amenities and ideas on naming the new park. Ultimately, feed-



back will be reviewed by the Blue Earth County Park Advisory Board to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. The Blue Earth County Board will have the final decision on naming and development features of the park. Visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov/parksurvey or search Guaranteed Sand and Gravel Property on the County's website to complete a survey and provide feedback on development of the newest natural resource in Blue Earth County.

**YOUR FEEDBACK IS NEEDED!
HELP DETERMINE HOW BLUE
EARTH COUNTY'S NEWEST PARK
IS NAMED AND DEVELOPED!**

WWW.BLUEEARTHCOUNTYMN.GOV/PARKSURVEY

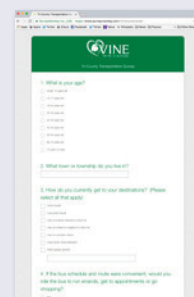
For more information contact Public Works at 304-4025.

COUNTYWIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS COMING TO RURAL BLUE EARTH COUNTY



Please visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/tricountytransit and take a short online survey to help with the planning process.

Have questions?
Need a paper copy
of the survey?
Contact Paige at VINE
at 386-5573 or paiges@vinevolunteers.com.



Get an Inside Perspective on Government

The Blue Earth County Citizens Academy offers a unique opportunity for citizens to get an inside perspective on how county government works and become engaged through a series of seven free interactive classes.

**TUESDAY EVENINGS
MARCH 21 TO MAY 2, 2017
6 P.M. – 9 P.M.
VARIOUS COUNTY FACILITIES**

Applications are now being accepted for the 2017 program at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/citizensacademy. For questions or to learn more information call 304-4491.



Congratulations to all graduates of the 2016 program; Hugh Belgard, Thomas Bicek, Bridget Forst, Carlienne Frisch, Robert Frisch, Sue Howard, Mohamed Ibrahim, Kevin Kes, John Mickelson, Rodney Mitchell, Abdulkadir Ahmed Mohamed, Ayan Muse, Dawn Schaefer, Darold Schaefer, Jenny Stratton, Linda Thomas and Janet Weir.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AT A GLANCE



HUMAN SERVICES

Blue Earth County Supportive Housing, also known as the South Central Supportive Housing Initiative (SCSHI), has been offering rental assistance and supportive services to individuals and families that qualify as long-term homeless and have complex barriers to housing since 2006. Although the SCSHI is housed in Blue Earth County, the program serves eight counties in our region. The SCSHI is not able to work with all homeless populations. The program is funded to only work with those persons and families that struggle with long-term homelessness and have the most barriers towards housing. Long-term homelessness is defined as one consecutive year of homelessness or four episodes in the last three years.

Between January 1 and August 31, 2016, SCSHI HAS SERVED:

- 93 total participants in 67 households (including 26 families of 21 adults and 31 children)
- 71% with a mental health diagnosis
- 53% with a substance abuse diagnosis
- 59% with dual diagnosis of at least two types of disabilities

A recent change for the SCSHI program is the new "Coordinated Entry System" (CES), a federal and state funding requirement that standardizes access, assessment, and referrals for housing programs. Prior to CES, persons experiencing homelessness had to apply at every agency in the community, hoping they would qualify for one that had an opening. Also, before CES, referrals to housing programs came from many different sources. CES is the required intake and referral process for many housing and homelessness services providers across the 20-county Continuum of Care (CoC), including the SCSHI.

If you are a person experiencing homelessness or know someone facing a housing crisis please view the **Coordinated Entry Access Sites for Blue Earth County Guide** found at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/housingaccess

To learn more about Blue Earth County SCSHI or Coordinated Entry contact 304-4442.



Blue Earth County Child Support Services Rank Above State Average in Performance Areas

Blue Earth County's Child Support Unit within the Human Services Department locally administers the Federal Child Support program, which is celebrating four decades of helping children and families in 2016.

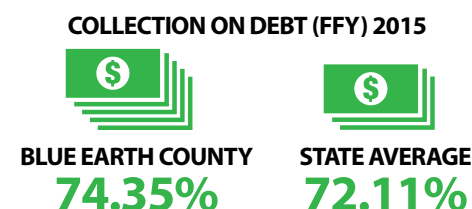
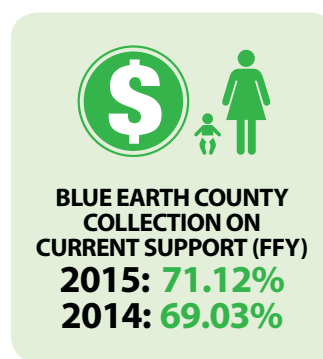
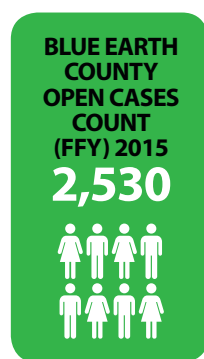
Data provided from statewide statistics point to the successful work being done by diligent case workers in the Blue Earth County Child Support Unit. Recent process improvement initiatives and the implementation of new approaches to enforcement by staff have proven successful for the County in ranking above the State of Minnesota average in four of the five key performance



areas. Due to the work of the unit, record high collection of current support payments and additional efficiencies have been achieved.

Areas within the Federal Child Support system that are measured include paternity establishment, order establishment, collection on current support, collection on debt (arrears), and cost effectiveness.

The following facts and figures showcase some of Blue Earth County's performance outcomes.



For more information regarding Child Support visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov or contact 304-4442.



Comprehensive worksite wellness programs have been shown to be very effective in improving health and saving money through lower health costs, increased productivity, and decreased absenteeism.

As part of a statewide health initiative, BE WELL @ WORK partners with local employers to help establish or enhance and maintain wellness programs through technical assistance, networking opportunities, and grant funding.



WORKSITE WELLNESS EDUCATION AND NETWORKING MEETING Thursday, October 20 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
Third Floor Conference Room
205 S. 5th Street, Mankato

Registration and light breakfast at 8 a.m.
Meeting will start promptly at 8:30 a.m.

RSVP by October 17 to Kristen Friedrichs
at 507-304-4411 or kristen.friedrichs@blueearthcountymn.gov

Visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov/BeWellAtWork to learn more!

BE WELL @ WORK is a wellness program offered locally through Blue Earth County Public Health with the goal of supporting healthy living and reducing chronic disease. It is supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Program, Minnesota Department of Health.

PUBLIC SAFETY



Underage Drinking – Are Your Kids at Risk?

By Pat McDermott, Blue Earth County Attorney



MN Student Survey Statistics (Blue Earth County)

- 46% of 11th grade students and 16% of 9th graders used alcohol during the last year.
- 14% of 11th grade students and 7% of 9th graders binge drink (5 or more drinks once or more in the past 30 days).
- Only 5% of 11th grade students disagree that parents should clearly communicate with them the importance of not using alcohol.
- 24% of 9th graders started drinking at age 13 or younger.

IT CAN COST YOU: Providing Alcohol to Someone Under 21 Doesn't Come Cheap

Teens say that their primary sources of alcohol are friends and family. According to statewide survey information, more than 80 percent of Blue Earth County 11th graders who drank alcohol within the last month reported they obtained it from friends and family.

Minnesota laws should make any person think twice about providing alcohol to someone else—they can be charged with a gross misdemeanor, go to jail for up to one year and be fined up to \$3,000. In addition, an adult who provides alcohol to an underage drinker can be sued for any damages that result.

Kevin's Law—Brockway Bill: (Minnesota Statute 340A.701) Increases criminal penalties from a gross misdemeanor to a felony for a person of any age who provides alcohol to someone under 21 if death or great bodily harm results.

Civil Cause of Action—ZAP Bill: (Minnesota Statute 340A.90) Expands civil liability to include cases of adult provision of alcohol to youth. Allows injured parties the right to sue the adult provider to recover their damages.

Beer Keg Registration: (Minnesota Statute 340A.513) All beer kegs sold in Minnesota must have a unique ID number that links the keg to the purchaser. This information will allow local law enforcement to trace beer kegs and charge any adult who provides alcohol to minors.

Not A Drop: (Minnesota Statute 169A.33) If you are under 21 and you drink and drive, even if under .08

blood alcohol content, you could face misdemeanor charges, lose your license from 30-180 days, fines and higher insurance.

Social Host: People who host, lose the most

Blue Earth County and other municipalities have social host ordinances. If you host or allow an event or gathering where alcoholic beverages are present, and you know or reasonably should know that an underage person will possess or consume any alcoholic beverage; you may be held criminally responsible if you fail to take reasonable steps to prevent the underage consumption or possession of alcohol.



If you host an event or gathering, you do not have to be present at the event or gathering to be held criminally responsible.

Never provide alcohol to teens — it's illegal, unsafe, and it can cost you! Underage drinking is not a minor problem. ■

Parents make a Difference!

- Be a Good Example
- Talk/listen every day
- Set boundaries
- Monitor activities & friends
- Tell them you care
- Get to know the parents of your teen's friends
- Be aware of warning signs
- If needed, ask for help
- Stay involved with your teen
- Enjoy family meals together
- Do activities together

Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs (MDVA) Dental Assistance (Including Extractions and Dentures)

Dental benefits are provided to Veterans and their dependents for routine dental, extraction, and denture procedures. This benefit is income and asset based, and upon MDVA approval of eligibility you and your dependents may receive up to \$1,000 for annual routine dental care paid to your choice of providers. If your dental provider determines that dentures are necessary, MDVA will issue an additional denture authorization for up to \$3,000 of once-per-lifetime benefits, and if needed, an additional once-per-lifetime extraction authorization for up to \$2,000 specifically for tooth extractions in preparation for the dentures.



If you qualify for this benefit, you may be eligible for other state Veterans benefits, to include optical, special needs grants and disaster relief.

Please contact Veterans Services at 304-4246 for assistance or more information.

HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH FOSTER CARE

Blue Earth County is in need of licensed foster homes to help support children and families in our community. Homes for infancy through adolescence are needed and foster placements can range from overnight to long term care.

Being a foster parent is a rewarding way to give back. Foster parents do receive a stipend to help offset the cost of care and have a support team dedicated to the well-being of the child or children in care.

Homes from all backgrounds including single or married with or without children are needed.



If you are interested in becoming a licensed foster care provider or want to learn more, please contact Blue Earth County Human Services at 304-4319.

For more information please contact the Office of Blue Earth County Attorney at 304-4600, or attorney@blueearthcountymn.gov.





LIBRARY SERVICES

Celebrate Halloween at the Library

SATURDAY, OCT. 15 AT 10:30 A.M.

Wear your costumes to our fun Halloween Party! First, we'll watch "Count Whackula's Things That Go Bump in the Night," a not-too-scary family-oriented magic and comedy show. Then, you can trick-or-treat around the library! Please call 304-4020 for more information.



Holiday Fun with Puppets

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17 AT 10:30 .AM.

Shari Ellingson Loughary will present "A Gator Alley Holiday" with her puppets, and then kids will make holiday finger puppets. Best for kids ages 3 to 9.



Access Blue Earth County Library System Information and Resources 24/7 Online!



Use the Library's website to:

- View the library catalog
- Download e-books
- Manage your account
- Learn about events, clubs and educational programs
- Find information regarding Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton library branches
- And More!

www.beclibrary.org

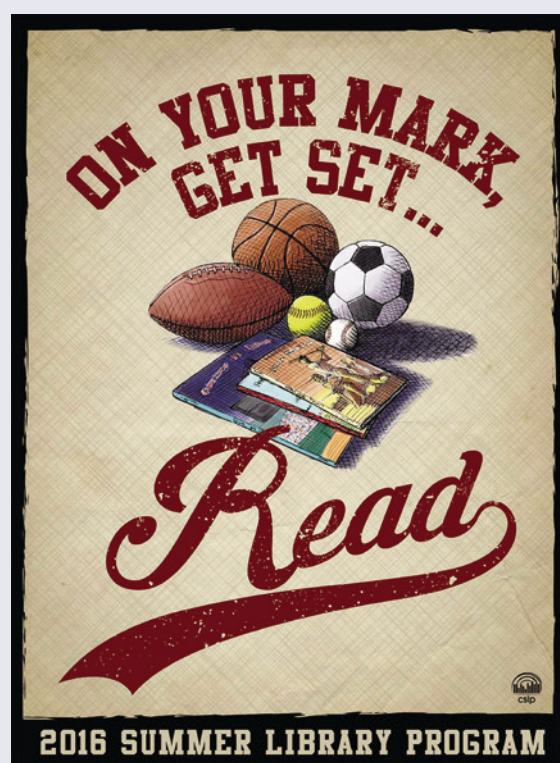
Stay updated on events and information via Facebook by liking the Blue Earth County Library System page.



Be sure to check the website's new look coming in November!

THANK YOU

Participants & Sponsors of the 2016 Summer Reading Program



The Blue Earth County Library System had 2,768 children participate in its 2016 Summer Reading Program, "On Your Mark, Get Set, Read." In addition to earning prizes for time spent reading, 4,314 children and adults attended 43 auditorium events at our three libraries. Many thanks to our generous community sponsors:

Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries
The Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund of MN
Minnesota 93 Radio
Noodles & Company
Chipotle Mexican Grille
Mankato MoonDogs
Papa Murphy's Pizza
Jersey Mike's
Insomnia Cookies
Mankato's Experimental Aircraft Assn.

Key Sponsor:

Taylor Corporation

TAYLOR

FREE

Teddy Bear Clinic



**Thursday, October 20
10:30 a.m.**

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

Bring your favorite stuffed animal for a checkup and enjoy fun activities highlighting healthy habits.



SERVING YOU



Drew Campbell
District 1 Commissioner
P.O. Box 1283
Mankato, MN 56002-1283
387-2408 (H) / 382-1374 (C)
drew.campbell@blueearthcountymn.gov



Vance Stuehrenberg
District 2 Commissioner
2316 East Main St.
Mankato, MN 56001
388-8129 (H) / 317-3942 (C)
vances@blueearthcountymn.gov



Mark Piepho, Vice-chair
District 3 Commissioner
8 Skyline Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
345-4380 (H) / 327-4161 (C)
mark.piepho@blueearthcountymn.gov



Will Purvis
District 4 Commissioner
13798 534th Avenue
Vernon Center, MN 56090
549-3420 (H) / 317-5465 (C)
will.purvis@blueearthcountymn.gov



Kip Bruender, Chair
District 5 Commissioner
204 Joan Lane
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
257-2116 (H) / 382-2440 (C)
kip.bruender@blueearthcountymn.gov



Brad Peterson, Sheriff
Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4800
brad.peterson@blueearthcountymn.gov



Patrick R. McDermott, County Attorney
Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4600
pat.mcdermott@blueearthcountymn.gov



Bob Meyer, County Administrator
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4235
bob.meyer@blueearthcountymn.gov

Board Information

The Blue Earth County Board generally meets every other Tuesday in the Boardroom at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse, 204 South Fifth Street, Mankato. For more information and specific meeting dates and times visit:

www.blueearthcountymn.gov/board

Citizens who wish to address the Board of Commissioners at a meeting must contact Administration at 304-4284 before noon Thursday preceding the Board meeting. This is needed to manage the Board's schedule. The Board will not take action at the time of the presentation, but will direct County staff to respond appropriately to issues raised by citizens.

Write Now!

Write & Tell Us What You Think.

The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners and other officials are committed to providing quality service to our residents. Responding to your concerns and needs is a priority.

Please fill out the information below and leave it with a receptionist at any County office, or mail it at your convenience to:

Blue Earth County Public Information
P.O. Box 8608
Mankato, MN 56002-8608
or email info@blueearthcountymn.gov

With which County department did you have contact?

Please Evaluate:	Excellent	Good	Poor
Courtesy of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value of service provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like County officials to know:

I have a suggestion:

If you want us to respond to your comments:

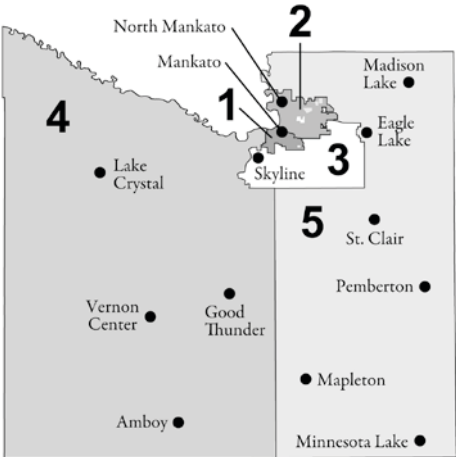
Name:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

**Thank you for your feedback.
We appreciate your comments so
we can serve you better!**

Blue Earth County COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS



SERVICE DIRECTORY



Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd., Mankato

Probation

1st Floor, 304-4750

Restitution/Restorative Justice
Adult & Juvenile Probation, Parole, Supervised Release and Diversion
Pre-trial Services/Bail Evaluation
Victim Restitution
Community Work Service Programs
Services to Drug and Truancy Specialty Courts

County Sheriff /Emergency Services

1st Floor, 304-4800

Jail
Patrol
Emergency Management
Dispatch
Civil Process
Permits: ATV, Burn, Gun
Records

5th Judicial District Court

2nd Floor, 304-4650

Traffic Tickets
Small Claims Court
Civil and Criminal Court

County Attorney

2nd Floor, 304-4600



Public Works Department
35 Map Dr., Mankato

Roads & Bridges, 304-4025

Road/Bridge Construction & Inspection
Permits: Driveway, Overweight/Size Loads, Utility
Culvert Sales
Swing-away Mailbox Mounts
Calcium Chloride for Dust Control

Park & Trail System, 304-4025

Camping & Shelter Reservations
Firewood Sales & Boat Rental

Agricultural Inspection, 304-4025
Weed Control & Seed Testing



Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St., Mankato

Facilities and Management

Lower Level, 304-4249

Finance

Lower Level, 304-4182

Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports

1st Floor, 304-4251

Assessing
Taxation
Recording
Ditch Management
Passports

Administration

2nd Floor, 304-4150

Public Information, 304-4491

Human Resources

2nd Floor, 387-8664

U of M Extension

3rd Floor, 304-4325

Agriculture & Horticulture
4-H/Youth Development
Nutrition Education Program
Misc. Program Areas



Blue Earth County Library
100 E. Main St., Mankato

General Services, 304-4001

Children's & Young Adult Services, 304-4020

Adult & Reference Services, 304-4022

Fines & Renewals, 304-4010

Meeting Room Reservations, 304-4002

Administration, 304-4002

Mapleton Public Library, 524-3513

Lake Crystal Public Library, 726-2726



County Government Center
410 S. Fifth St., Mankato

Taxpayer Services – License Center/Elections

Lower Level, 304-4340

Driver's Licenses
Motor Vehicle/Boat Registration
Fishing/Hunting Licenses
Birth/Death Certificates
Marriage Licenses
Voter Registration/Absentee Ballots
Filing of Notaries

Veterans Services

Lower Level, 304-4246

Federal & State Benefits
Transportation to VA Hospital

Information Technology

Lower Level, 304-4204

Human Services

Lower Level/1st/2nd/3rd Floors, 304-4222

Financial Assistance, 304-4335
Social Services, 304-4319
Community Health, 304-4319
Mental Health Center, 304-4319
Child Protection/Intake, 304-4444
Child Support, 304-4166

Environmental Services

3rd Floor, 304-4381

Planning & Zoning
Building & Feedlot Permits
Shorelands/Flood Plains
Water Wells/Septic Systems/Wetlands
Recycling Center/Compost Site/Landfill
Household Hazardous Waste Center
911/Rural Addressing

Serving Citizens Through County Government

Other County Facilities/Numbers

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
651 Summit Ave., Mankato, 304-4242

Ponderosa Landfill
20028 Gooseberry Lane, Mankato, 625-7301

Recycling Center
741 Waseca Ave., LeHillier, 345-4255

24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline, 304-4242

County TTY/TDD (Hearing Impaired), 304-4399



**BLUE EARTH
COUNTY**

visit us online:
www.blueearthcountymn.gov